March 16, 2022

Members of the Colchester Board of Education;

I write again, with a heavy heart. At this time, after many meetings, emails and phone calls with members of the district and school staff, I have revoked my consent for special education for my child and requested a 504 plan under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Since October, I have had several PPTs with the team and yet my daughter continues to receive work that is far below grade level, not within the scope of the IEP and comes with no direct, explicit instruction. Her IEP still does not reflect her areas of weakness nor is it written in a way that is measurable and provides the avenues for her to make progress. My child feels demeaned, cheated, frustrated and hopeless. Despite my best efforts and countless meetings and letters, nothing has changed. At this point all she is receiving is her accommodations which can be provided through a 504 plan.

We have no faith in Colchester's special education program, especially at Bacon Academy. They simply are not capable of providing quality special education services. What a disservice to ALL students.

I would also like to make you aware that I was informed that the district's attorney would be present at the next PPT meeting should it have taken place. I believe this to be an intimidation tactic and not in the best interest of my child. Furthermore, I do not have the means to have my own attorney present, which puts me at a substantial disadvantage.

For your information: The Individuals with Disabilities Act adopts verbatim the statutory language at section 614(d)(1)(B)(vi) of the IDEA. Under this section, parents and public agencies have the discretion to bring to IEP meetings as IEP team members other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child. Under this statutory provision, the parent's and public agency's right to bring other individuals to the IEP meeting at their discretion must be exercised in a manner that ensures that all members of the IEP team have the knowledge or special expertise regarding the child to contribute meaningfully to the IEP. While it does not disallow the participation of the board attorney, attachment A to the IDEA 1997 regulations at 34 C.F.R. Part 300 explains: The presence of an attorney could contribute to a potentially adversarial atmosphere at the meeting. The same is true with regard to the presence of an attorney accompanying the parents at the IEP meeting. Even if the attorney possessed knowledge or special expertise regarding the child (§ 300.344(a)(6)), an attorney's presence would have the potential for creating an adversarial atmosphere that would not necessarily be in the best interests of the child. Therefore, the attendance of attorneys at IEP meetings should be strongly discouraged. I want you to be aware that this is how business is being conducted.

Additionally, I did receive a request on February 23, 2022 to share impressions about our experience with special education in Colchester with district special education consultants. I

responded immediately that I would like to participate in the virtual meeting, which was to take place the following week. I have heard nothing since, nor has a friend who is also concerned with her child's special education program. Has the meeting taken place already? If so, how were participants selected? I am not sure that an accurate picture of the health of special education in Colchester was garned if all who wanted to participate were not heard. I would appreciate a response to this question.

Respectfully,

Kathie Collins-Voiland

Ms. Morozowich-Please submit this letter into record. Since it does not contain the names of students or staff, it should be able to be entered into record.